

**JOINT PRESS RELEASE**  
**Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)**  
**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS)**

03-52

For release: June 10, 2003

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**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes**  
**Hold Negotiations Meeting June 9 & 10 in Washington**

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes held negotiation meetings in Washington, D.C., this week to further discuss the potential for an Annual Funding Agreement for certain programs, functions, activities and services for those portions of the National Bison Range Complex that lie within the Flathead Indian Reservation.

The discussions focused on the expectations of the tribes and the service, what areas of refuge management are inherently federal, and the Federal Register list of functional areas of refuge management that can be contracted under an Annual Funding Agreement.

“A lot of progress was made in increasing our mutual understanding in these key areas,” said Paul Hoffman, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, who is the lead negotiator for Interior. Although no agreement has been reached regarding which areas of refuge management would actually be part of a potential agreement, there were extensive discussions about all the available program areas and what level of federal oversight would be required.

“There is a lot of work that needs doing before we have the basis for an Annual Funding Agreement,” said Tribal Chairman Fred Matt.

Both sides are not discussing details of the negotiations since negotiations are still taking place. Hoffman defended the fact that the negotiations are not open to the public. “Nobody negotiates contracts or discusses personnel matters in public,” he said. The Montana Congressional delegation was advised of the meeting times and invited to attend.